

**Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron
integrates with 128 ARW**

FROM THE TOP



Commander 128 ARW,
Col. Daniel Yenchesky

As of Oct. 1, 2013 the 128th Air Refueling Wing has implemented the Commander's Inspection Program, a new inspection program to replace the legacy system of over 100 inspections.

“How is this going to change what I, as an Airman, do?”

As I walk around units and talk to Airmen about the Commander's Inspection Program (CCIP) and the Air Force Inspection System (AFIS), this is the most frequent question I hear. To answer that question it is first necessary to understand that, if we do this right, it is one of the most powerful, positive, and fundamental changes in the Air Force in decades.

CCIP and AFIS eliminated 115 external inspections, validations, certifications, and accreditations that had us changing our focus from one inspection team to the next. The parade of in-briefs and out-briefs would have been comical if it hadn't been such a burden and distraction from mission readiness and training of Airmen. As the threat of an external review approached we would adjust our processes, tidy up our continuity binders and come into compliance just long enough to get the team off of the base. Many times, the adjustments we made were not based on Air Force Instruction and Mission Requirement, but on the pet peeves of individual functional evaluators.

So what has changed?

Now, CCIP puts the authority and responsibility for mission readiness back into the hands of Commanders, Officers, Senior NCO's, Supervisors, and Airmen. This new system compels organizations to understand what their requirements are, and to resource those requirements in accordance with Commander priorities. It will take time to make CCIP/AFIS part of our culture, but it will be incredibly empowering when we succeed. For this system to work, we must foster conditions that increase the willingness of all individuals in the Wing to report weaknesses so that they can be fixed. We must move to a system where we reward error reporting, formally document deficiencies, and make data-driven decisions. This broader system of governance will allow Commanders to take risk when needed, and to focus on Mission Readiness, not inspection readiness.

To answer the opening question; “How is this going to change what I, as an Airman, do?” You will have more resources and training time to focus on your core job skills. You will have more time to focus on developing as an Airman. You will be able to focus on the Mission.



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Cover photo: Aeromedical technicians from the 94th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron conduct in-flight training during an AE mission aboard a Milwaukee KC-135 aircraft Jan. 19, 2014. (Air National Guard photo by Technical Sgt. James Michaels/Released).

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As the boom operator
cranked open the cargo hatch
of the KC-135R, the warm California air
was a welcome contrast to the stale, pressurized
air of the aircraft to patient and passenger
Lance Corporal
Matthew Ehlers.

AEROMEDICAL EVACUATION SQUADRON INTEGRATES WITH 128 ARW

Ehlers' knee was elevated and bandaged up to cover a wound that resulted from a 14-foot fall that sent him home from Afghanistan.

The engines' drone wound down and the medical staff aboard the airborne ambulance prepared to move Ehlers' stretcher to the medical transport vehicle approaching the aircraft. Ehlers' relief and delight was apparent in his facial expression, as two fellow Marines and a civilian medical staffer carried his stretcher and his bags to the transport vehicle. The flight nurse on the aeromedical team signed paperwork releasing charge of their patient to the medical staff at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, San Diego.

The 128th Air Refueling Wing participated in a total force integration aeromedical evacuation mission from Jan. 12 through 20, 2014, in order to transport injured servicemembers to their home stations.

Members from the participating Air Reserve and Air National Guard aeromedical cells aided in the transportation of 18 wounded personnel in a 9-day multi-transcontinental mission.

Prior to flying to Andrews Air Force Base to pick up the AES team and patients for

transport, the Milwaukee tanker was configured for medical equipment to be added on by the 94th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron. Three 800-pound patient support pallets, capable of holding six litters each, were loaded and locked into the cargo bay of the aircraft. Emergency kits, suction devices, IV stands, oxygen level monitors, and locked containers of medication were secured to the pallets.

Master Sgt. Amanda Look, a boom operator with the 128 ARW, conducted egress training for the aeromedical team - two nurses and three aeromedical technicians - before loading the patients. Boom operators have the additional responsibility of handling passengers by assisting and informing them of safety and egress procedures. Look was also responsible for loadmaster, flight engineer, and navigator duties during the flight.

"Our primary responsibility is air refueling, so that's what we're used to doing on a day-to-day basis, whether it's operational or training," said Look. "However, on a mission like this, we hone in on our other responsibilities, which are all of the cargo and passengers and our patients that are in the back of the aircraft."

► Aeromedical technicians conduct in-flight training during an AE mission aboard a Milwaukee KC-135 aircraft. (Air National Guard photo by Technical Sgt. James Michaels/Released)



▼ Aeromedical technicians conduct in-flight training during an AE mission aboard a Milwaukee KC-135 aircraft. (Air National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Jeremy Wilson/Released)



Look has spent 13 years of her 18-year military career as a boom operator and said that aeromedical missions help her keep current in training with cargo systems and interacting with medical crews and patients.

Eight patients, including Ehlers, were boarded onto the aircraft that would transport them to medical facilities near their home stations.

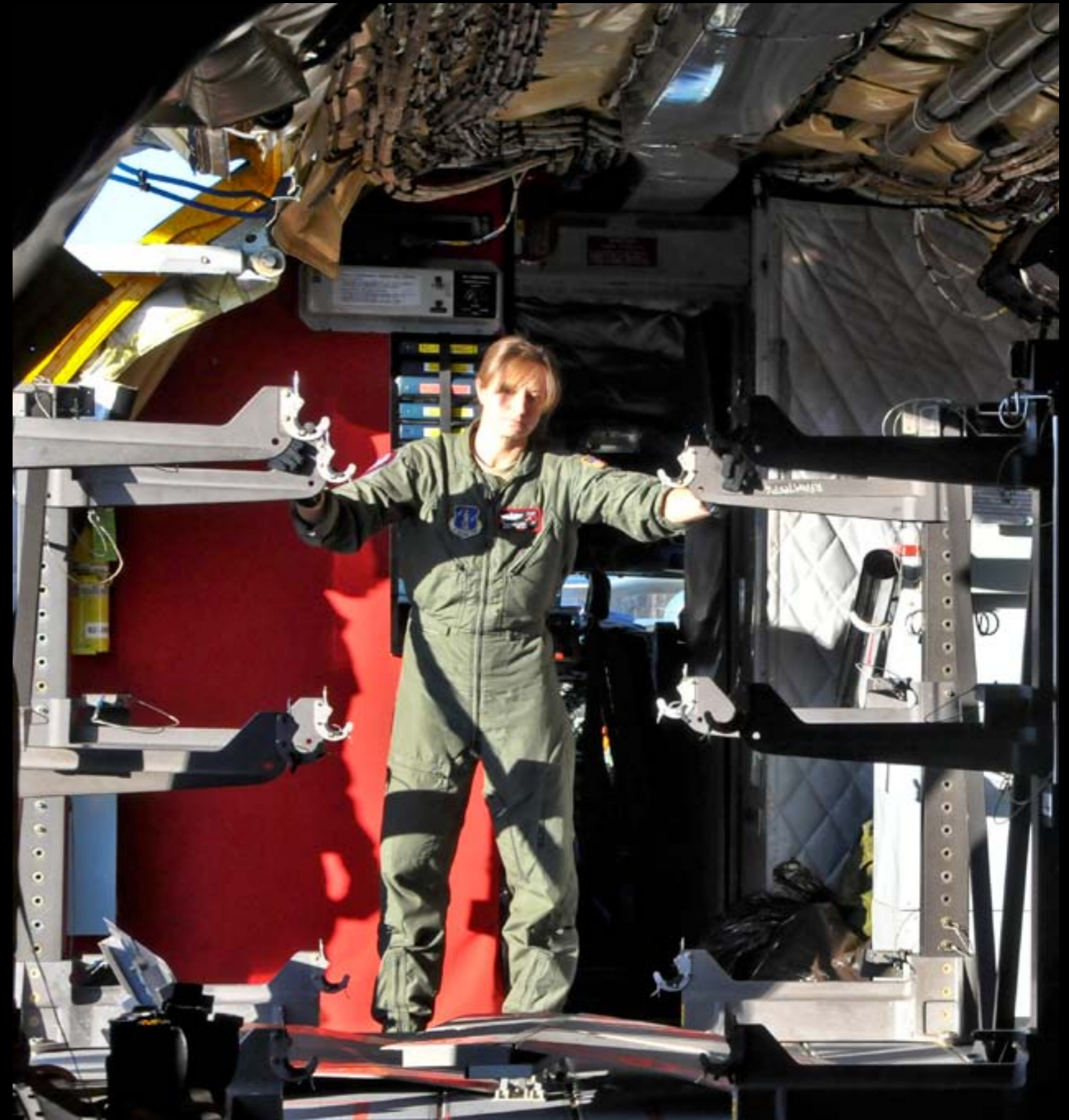
“We didn’t have any too serious injuries on this trip,” said Look, “but I have seen some really, really bad injuries coming out of Afghanistan and Iraq and it really pulls at your heartstrings because you know that they’re just doing their job just like we’re out here doing our job.

Ehlers was at the forward operating base of southern Musa Qala when his injury occurred.

“I was walking early in the morning around 4:30 in the morning and I was going out to reinforce the post. I fell off a drop-off and my knee had a pretty big hole in it,” said Ehlers. “By the time I could see what happened to it, I could see the ACL and knee cap. There was no tear or fracture surprisingly.”

Throughout the duration of the mission, the 128 ARW crew transported 18 patients to 13 different locations including Travis AFB, Calif.; Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash.; and Lackland AFB, Texas.

“This is one of the most purposeful missions that we can support on many levels,” said Look. “We are doing our part to help bring someone one step closer to home and their families.”



PORTRAIT OF AN AIRMAN



Airman 1st Class
Jazelle Mitchell



Name: Jazelle Mitchell

Hometown: Kenosha, WI

Date of Enlistment: September 2012

Organization: Personnel

Responsibilities: Customer service; Advise officers and airmen on military personnel issues and programs; Create, maintain, and audit personnel records; Perform CSS administrative functions; Create ID cards

Civilian occupation: Server

Hobbies: Writing, cooking, and any outdoor activities, including camping, hiking, rock climbing, fishing, etc.

Something people don't know: "I have traveled and lived in various places. I've lived in over 20 homes and attended 7 different schools when I was younger. I have also been to about 6 countries and spent time in over 12 states."

AEROSPACE PROPULSION SHOP



Job Description: Responsible for the engines and APUs on the KC-135R Weapon System

Deployments: CENTCOM, Guam, Turkey, France, Spain, Japan

Something people don't know: The engine training facility is used by active duty, AF Reserve, ANG, foreign military sales, and Milwaukee Area Technical College. The training engine was salvaged from tail 57-1470.

TEXT FREE IN 2014

Story and photos by **Staff Sgt. Jenna V. Lenski**

Senior Airman Megan Smith, a member of the 128th Air Refueling Wing, knows from experience the severity of distracted driving.

“At least once a day I see someone on their phone, using it in a dangerous behavior and causing a distraction to everyone around them. I almost rear-ended someone when I was 16 years old. He made me pull over. It was pretty scary,” said Smith.

Smith, a Kenosha-native, presented a personal campaign against texting while driving to her fellow unit members at the unit training assembly here Jan. 4-5, 2014.

The campaign consisted of her personal stories of negligent driving and her goal to spread awareness of the danger and consequences of such acts.

The 128 ARW Safety Office supported her campaign by getting her exposure and sharing the policies and disciplinary action that could result from texting while driving on base.

“The punishment is relatively serious. They lose their driving privileges here on the base,” said Maj. Jason Park, safety officer of the 128 ARW.

Smith encourages all of her fellow unit members to make a goal of keeping their phones put away while driving. She printed information cards supporting her campaign with statistics of people who have committed the dangerous act in the past and what their consequences were.

Smith also had stickers made with the message “You can’t LOL in a prison cell.” She disseminated the stickers to participants of the campaign who then took “selfies” wearing that badge of commitment. The selfies were to be posted to social media networks with the hash tag “#Textfree2014.”

Smith hopes to spread the message of this campaign to local schools.

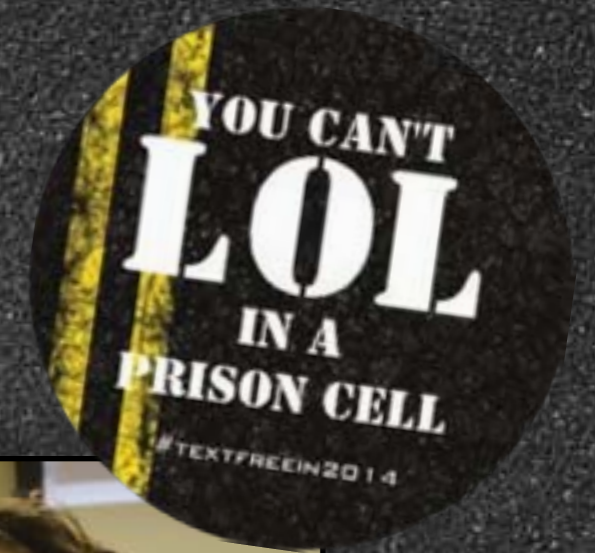
“I just kind of want to make the world a better place, and this is a great way to start,” said Smith.





▲ Senior Airman Megan Smith, a member of the 128 ARW, shares her campaign against texting while driving to members of the Operations Group here Jan. 4, 2014. Smith encourages people to keep their phones out of sight while driving to eliminate the distraction.

▼ Senior Airman Carla Prospere, Technical Sgt. Nicole Justman, Master Sgt. Amy Bartlett, and Staff Sgt. Maria Campbell, members of the 128 ARW Operations Group, proudly sport the #TextFree2014 campaign sticker in support of eliminating texting while driving after the presentation Jan. 4, 2014 here.



“The minute you stop talking about it is the minute they forget thinking about it.”

▲ Senior Airman Megan Smith, in regards to talking about texting while driving with friends and family members.



Elements of the 128th AREFG activated for duty in Persian Gulf region

By TSgt Wayne J. Rodriguez

(At approximately 5:30 p.m. (Milwaukee time) on 16 Jan, President George Bush launched Operation Desert Storm, the code name for the liberation of Kuwait. The United States is at war with Iraq.)

For the first time since 1951, elements of the 128th Air Refueling Group have been activated. Not since the United States was at war in Korea has the 128th been called for involuntary active duty during a national emergency.

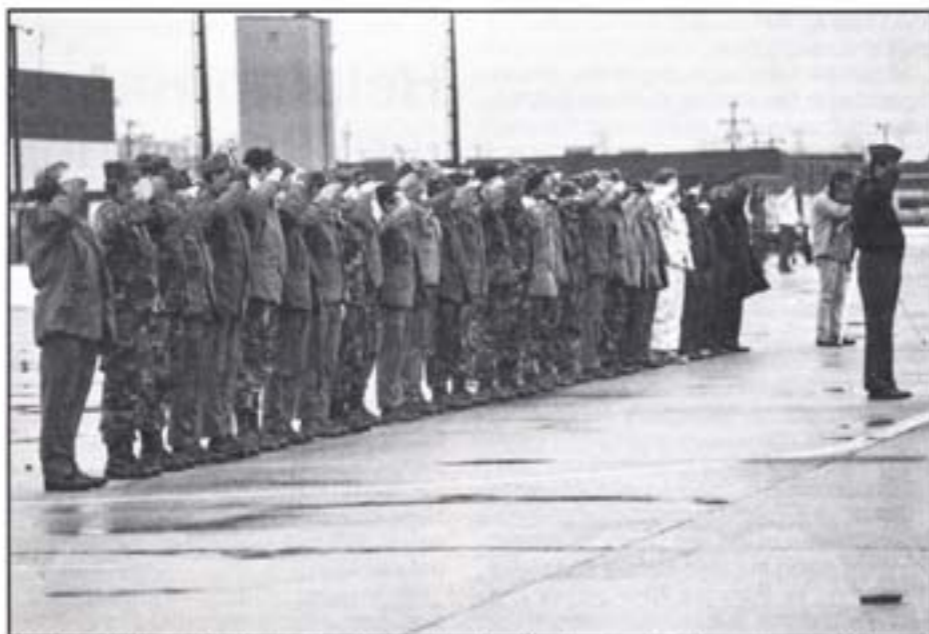
Although the 128th has been involved in Operation Desert Shield since August 7th on a voluntary rotating basis, this latest call means the deployed members will be on active duty for 6 months or more.

With tears and cheers, family members said goodbye to their loved ones as 128th personnel left Milwaukee for duty in the Middle East. Everyone was both proud and sad as the KC-135s taxied down the runway. Not knowing when they would return weighed heavily on the minds of those left behind.

On Saturday, December 29th, as the last aircraft prepared to leave, an assortment of 128th personnel lined up to salute their departing comrades. With TV cameras filming the display of respect and affection, the 128th said farewell and good luck.

In early December the 128th was alerted for possible activation and Col Gene Schmitz and his deputy commanders began work to organize and plan for the deployment. On December 20th the activation orders were received and planning swung into high gear. Personnel were notified when to report, equipment and supplies were packed, and last minute maintenance was completed on all aircraft.

Family support briefings were held to inform the family dependents of the services that would be made available to them. The chaplains and legal officers helped the personnel get their personal affairs in order



On Dec. 29th, as the last aircraft departed for the Persian Gulf region, members of the 128th offered a silent tribute by saluting their comrades. The departures were the result of a call to active duty for some elements of the 128th AREFG.

—wills and powers-of-attorney were prepared for each individual before departure.

Col Schmitz, in a message to dependents before he left, said he would do everything possible to insure the safe return of everyone. He stressed the importance of family support for those left at home.

As was the case with all Wisconsin units; the local Milwaukee television stations came out to Mitchell Airport to report on the departures. Thousands of southeastern Wisconsin viewers watched as 128th personnel and aircraft left for duty in the Persian Gulf area.

For one member of the 128th Air Refueling Group, SMSgt Lewis E. Jaye, this call to active duty is the second time it has happened during his career. As a member of the 128th Fighter Interceptor Wing in

1951, he was called to active duty during the Korean War.

SMSgt Jaye is the NCOIC, Crew Communications, for the 126th Air Refueling Squadron.

For members of the 128th left behind feelings ran high in the knowledge that our people would get the job done. It is a sobering experience to watch your friends leave for possible combat. Most people felt they should have been on those aircraft, and were determined to carry on with the job back in Milwaukee and to provide any assistance needed overseas.

As this issue of The Tankard goes to press it is not known how the crisis will be resolved. It is hoped that a peaceful solution can be found and our friends can return home soon.



Col. Gene Schmitz Group Commander 128th part of Desert Shield/Desert Storm

By Major Paul Bart

Operation Desert Shield evolved into Operation Desert Storm, and personnel of the 128th Air Refueling Group have been a part of its every beat.

From the very beginning of this military operation in the Persian Gulf, our unit has been instrumental in its success. Whether it be the successful refueling of fighter jets over the Saudi sands or the smooth and efficient processing of troops through the mobility lines and on to awaiting transports, 128th personnel have been performing flawlessly, like a fine tuned watch.

Now that the first wave of members have been deployed, our mission here in Milwaukee has been modified. Prior to his deployment overseas, Col Schmitz said that we here in Milwaukee have three important tasks:

- 1) Support of our alert aircraft.
- 2) Support of the personnel deployed to other bases.
- 3) Support of the unit family members.

We support the alert aircraft and crews supporting us from the New Jersey and Utah Air National Guard by providing maintenance support in addition to COMSEC services.

We are supporting the deployed personnel by providing daily news updates in addition to coordinating courier service for morale building videos and letters.

Finally, we are supporting the unit family members with weekly Family Support Group meetings, video postcards, and hotline information service. All unit members remaining in Milwaukee are invited to attend these weekly meetings every Friday at 7 p.m. in the Dining Hall and the OPS briefing room. Your presence in just talking to the families and helping out wherever needed will strengthen our unit regardless of distance.

War is a terrible thing with many dangers and risks; but with total unit support, we can cope with any eventuality and possibly even prosper. I am confident that when we welcome everyone back home that we will realize that we are a stronger, tougher and healthier unit as the result of Desert Shield/Desert Storm.



A spare engine was loaded onto a C5 transport from the Military Airlift Command during the Jan UTA. The engine, along with other equipment and supplies was being sent to the 1706 Air Refueling Wing (Provisional) in the Persian Gulf Region. The 1706th is the unit in which elements of the 128th are attached.

Helping Hand set to assist families of deployed troops

Operation Helping Hand (OHH) is a program designed to assist families of those personnel who are serving in the Persian Gulf area in support of Operation Desert Shield. The program is administered by the Fort McCoy Chaplain's Office to assist those families in need throughout the State of Wisconsin. Here's how the program works:

a. Upon verification of a financial need by the Post Service Officer and/or local clergy, a grant of up to \$75 may be issued per family. Call Chaplains Larry Eakes or Gary Cowall at Fort McCoy at 608-388-4203/3353 with assistance requests and details.

b. In situations deemed to be emergencies, grants in excess of the \$75 limit may be authorized (for food or other necessary expenses after consulting with local clergy and/or Red Cross).

c. Checks for other than food assistance shall be issued after presentation and approval of a bill from the vendor sent by the Post Service Officer or local clergy.

d. Paragraph one should include the service member's name, rank, social security number, and unit. Indicate spouse's name and number of children.

e. Paragraph two should include personal circumstances of individual's need for assistance.

f. Paragraph three should make note of other sources contacted, if any (Red Cross and Army Emergency Relief-AER).

g. Paragraph four should state the recommendations of the requesting Post Service Officer or clergy.

h. Contact your local clergy for assistance in identifying those families in need, and give them a copy of the program and ask for their help.

As with any large undertaking, finances

will be needed to support these assistance requests. Chaplain Eakes stated that every donated dollar will go to those families in need. We ask that your Post and Auxiliary Unit hold a fund-drive in support of OHH or make a direct grant from your funds. We also encourage our members to send individual donations. Make your check payable to "Operation Helping Hand" and mail to:

Commander, Fort McCoy
Attn: AFZR-XO-CH
Fort McCoy, WI 54656-5000

THE TANKARD

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4 July 2013

Today was a regular work day for everyone assigned to the 445th Air Expeditionary Advisory Squadron (AEAS) at Shindand Air Base, Afghanistan. We talked a lot today during work about what the 4th of July meant to our families back home and how we typically celebrated America's Independence Day. Everyone in the 445 AEAS is looking forward to what the Dining Facility (DFAC) has to offer tonight for food and what type of patriotic memorabilia might be set up along the serving lines. We have also been discussing who might show up at our compound for our 1900 hour cigar burn and near beer social event that we planned earlier this week.

Special events and holidays honored at Shindand Air Base (SHAB) unite members of the 445 AEAS with Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force-Afghanistan (CJSOTF-A) operators, Regional Command

– West (RC-W) International Security Assistance Force partners like the Italians, USAF Train Advise and Assist (TAA) personnel from the 838th Air Expeditionary Advisory Group, and various other Task Forces comprised of US Army soldiers and Other Government Agencies (OGA). This evening's DFAC experience and our social event is going to be a time when all of us supporting CJSOTF-A and TAA operations at SHAB can share common beliefs without getting wrapped up in the stress of working in whatever organization we are assigned to.

It will also be interesting to see how the foreign national contractors from countries like India and Indonesia, who work in the DFAC will perceive how America's Independence Day should be celebrated. I also can't imagine how the local Afghan community views America's Independence Day on July 4, 1776 considering they have been fighting with other countries for control of Afghanistan for centuries dating back to the Alexander

Maj. Thomas Mielcarek, 445th AEAS,
Plans and Programs Flight Commander

the Great ruins, which are just North of Shindand Air Base. The Russian Air Traffic Control tower that we are currently using for our airfield operations is another example of past conflict over control of Afghanistan along with the nearby graveyard of Mig fighter jets and armored vehicles is truly amazing considering the Soviet war in Afghanistan ended in 1989. I am truly looking forward to seeing how local Afghans celebrate Afghanistan's Independence Day on August 19th, which commemorates the Anglo-Afghan Treaty of 1919 that ended three separate periods of fighting against Britain and India.

Most of the members of the 445 AEAS are all Air National Guard communicators from Rhode Island, Georgia, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Wisconsin, and Texas. The guys from Georgia and Texas are slated to leave next week; so far today they are in a great mood considering they survived to see the six month point in their six and a half month deployments. I have been in country now for 34 days and I am the only guy who is from the Wisconsin Air National Guard. Everyone seems to enjoy my accent; I was reminded again how different people from the Midwest talk compared to the fast speaking New Englanders or how slow the guys from Georgia and Texas are at formulating sentences. We laughed a lot today and we are all pretty used to one another now considering we had to quickly learn each other's strengths and weaknesses at supporting

the US Army's NIPRNet, SIPRNet, CX-I, and OGA networks for the more than 5,200 personnel assigned to SHAB.

As the plans and programs flight commander with the 445 AEAS I am responsible for all the IT requirements procurement, infrastructure projects, C4I systems planning, and review of associated contracts for the US Army's Base Operating Support – Integrator mission at SHAB and in RC-W. In addition, I supervise 9 civilian O&M contractors and 5 military personnel who ensure management of Information Assurance policy, issue of COMSEC material, and maintenance of the network infrastructure backbone.

So far the best part of my deployment has been working IT infrastructure projects for the CJSOTF and TAA buildup of Afghanistan Air and Army Forces to ensure SHAB's enduring presence after the stand down of Operation Enduring Freedom and shift to NATO's Resolute Support mission in 2015.

I am looking forward to working more with the Italians and other coalition partners supporting the CJSOTF-A and TAA missions at SHAB. My success or failure from this experience will be a culmination of everything I have learned from my previous 19 years of military service in the Army Reserve, Air National Guard, and prior active duty time with the United States Air Force.



◀ Mielcarek received the Bronze Star on Jan. 5, 2014 for his exceptionally meritorious service in Afghanistan.



Capt. Philip Cunningham 128 ARW Chaplain



Civilian photo of 128 ARW Chaplain
Capt. Philip Cunningham

I want to start by saying how happy I am to be serving with the 128th and express my gratitude for how welcoming and gracious everyone has been to me. I am coming here from the 149th Fighter Wing in San Antonio, and while the weather is obviously much different, my family and I are very happy to be once again be living in the Badger State. I say “once again” because we were here from 2005 through 2008, while I attended seminary at Nashotah House Theological Seminary. I have now returned as the Associate Dean of my aforementioned seminary, after having served as a parish priest for five years in Texas. In my short time with the wing I have been very impressed by the professionalism, collegiality and warmth of the members of the 128th. I look forward to getting to know all of you better in this New Year.

With my new beginning here, it has led me to think a bit about the whole idea of new beginnings. Often the New Year gets singled out as a point in time where we try to recreate

ourselves or at least try to change something about who we are. Which may sound like an odd thing to say, because after all aren't we always the same person? This is true to an extent, but we might ask if we are fully the person that we want to be. There may be weaknesses in ourselves that we would like to strengthen or a relationship that we want to heal or simply a bad habit that we would like to drop.

You have probably heard that sharks have to keep swimming or else they will die. And even though this is not true for all sharks, I think it is a good metaphor for our lives. We are not meant to stop improving. Maybe we have a temper that we would like to control, maybe we are not giving our full effort at work, or perhaps we need to better manage our time so that we can spend time on the things that matter most to us. If we give up on trying to make things better in ourselves, our lives stop having meaning and we become diminished as humans.

As clergy I have visited a lot of elderly people and there is something that I can usually tell about the person I am visiting within moments of meeting them, and that is how they have lived their life since retirement. For those who have stayed active and continued with goals and objectives there is usually a spirit of joy; whereas with those who retired with no plan and no activities simply begin to wilt. Additionally those types were more apt to complain and have sense of hopelessness.

Life is meant to be lived and having goals and objectives is an integral part of living. It is an acknowledgement that we are meant to improve ourselves and the world around us. So I would encourage everyone in the New Year to think about new beginnings, reflecting on where you want to go and who you want to be and then set about making that happen.



Airman First Class Emily Albright (center) prepares to set chocks around Air Force One's landing gear Thursday, Jan. 30, 2014.

Members of the 128th Air Refueling Wing, Wisconsin Air National Guard, supported President Obama's visit to the Milwaukee area. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by 1st Lt. Nathan T. Wallin/Released)